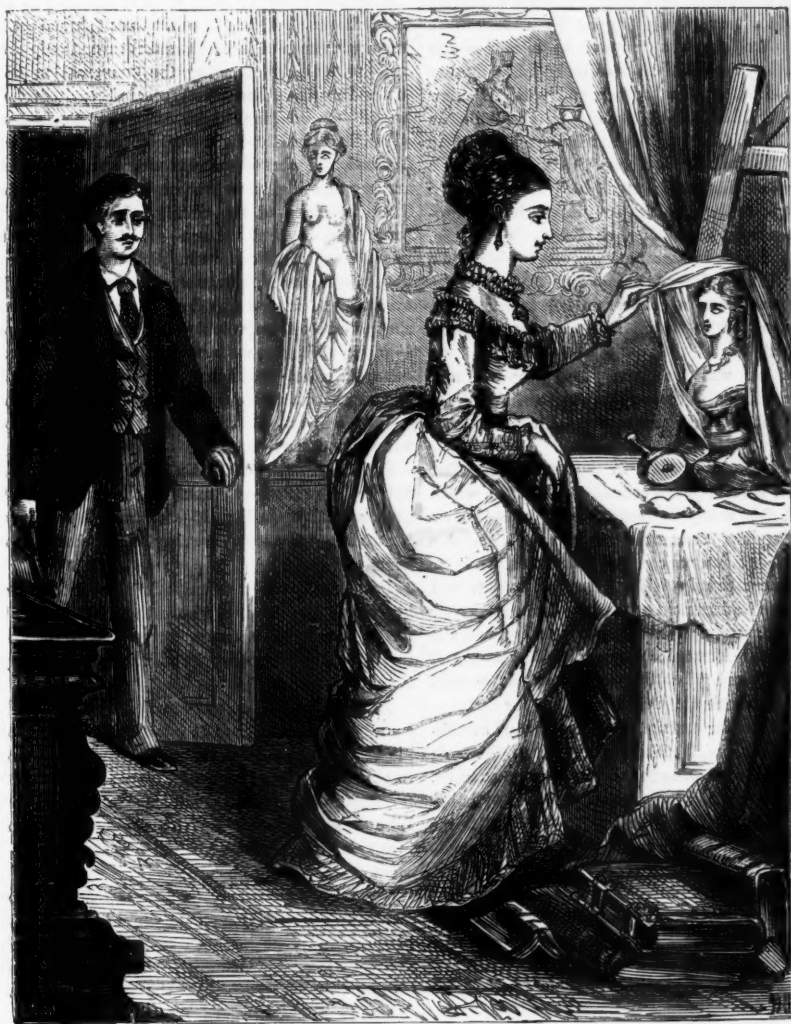


# THE QUIVER

Saturday, November 19, 1870.



"She stood still with one corner of the handkerchief in her hand"—p. 99.

## JOHN HESKETH'S CHARGE.

BY ALTON CLYDE, AUTHOR OF "UNDER FOOT," ETC. ETC.

### CHAPTER XVII.—THE VEILED HEAD.

CAROLINE ARDEN returned from town full of pleasant gossip about her visit, and the sayings and doings of gay Mrs. Walford and her sisters, who were among the few whom the young lady con-

descended to number among her friends. This was for her mother's entertainment. The unexpected appearance of John Hesketh accompanied by Eva Ashton, and her own recognition of them while

driving through the square, was news which she kept in reserve for her brother, promising herself much pleasure in its communication. But several days passed without securing the chance of a private talk with Edward, his time just then being fully occupied in assisting his father to overlook some extensive improvements that were going on upon the estate. Once or twice she was tempted to introduce the subject during the chat of the dinner-table, by way of experiment upon her brother, and with the view of surprising him into a betrayal of the truth as regarded himself and the attachment which she suspected he had formed for the schoolmaster's daughter; but this course would have obliged her to forego much of the gratification which she had promised herself in exercising, at Edward's expense, her talent for cross-examination, and which she could not have indulged before her father, whose presence was always a curb upon her satirical wit. She had resolved to watch and wait for a fitting opportunity.

The brother was far from suspecting the new interest which his sister was taking in his private affairs, and how closely she was watching his movements.

Since their morning walk in the garden, Caroline had formed certain plans concerning Edward, which she would be ready to act out if occasion required. In the meantime they would develop according to circumstances, and bear fruit, while he went on unconsciously living in the present, and dreaming such dreams as the young and happy dream while sunning themselves in the light of the passing hour. It would have given him a key if he had overheard what his ambitious sister said to herself, with a resolute tightening of her lips.

"If I find out for certain that there is an attachment between them, it shall be nipped in the bud; yes, even if Edward were to win my father's consent. Personally I have nothing against that pretty baby-faced girl; but if I can hinder it, she shall never bear the name of Arden, or come to Lowfield as its mistress."

The third day after her return found Caroline still watching for the chance of speaking privately to her brother. This wish of hers was not responded to by the young man himself, who carefully avoided being betrayed into what he dreaded, a tête-à-tête with Carrie.

It was about this time that Lionel Elliott's long visit drew to a close. All the family had been anticipating it; still it seemed to come upon them somewhat abruptly when Lionel made the announcement at breakfast one morning that he had had letters recalling him to London, and that he would be obliged to leave on the following day. The kind-hearted host expressed his regret that they were about to lose him from their circle, and warmly pressed him to renew his visit whenever business or

pleasure might bring him again into their neighbourhood.

Caroline was the only member of the family who seemed indifferent to the departure of the guest. Her mother talked it over when they were alone during the morning, and seemed inclined to dwell upon the subject, but the daughter listened without any appearance of interest, and returned only absent answers, quickly changing the conversation to the topics in which her mind seemed exclusively absorbed—speculation about the new Paris bonnet which had been ordered for her, and the important discussion of what she was to wear at an approaching archery meeting, that was expected to assemble all the aristocracy of the county. If Mrs. Arden had been a far-sighted matron—which she was not—it might have struck her that Caroline's manner was not quite natural; that there was something a little overstrained in the gay flow of airy nothings which she poured out so volubly about the archery party, —gossip which the mother would have enjoyed at any other time, but that morning her mind was full of Lionel Elliott, and she tried hard to keep him the leading subject of their conversation, but Caroline willed it otherwise.

Suddenly recollecting that the flower-vases had not been refilled—a task which the young lady always took upon herself—she used it as a pretext for making her escape, leaving her mother to resume her needlework.

It took only a few minutes for Caroline to possess herself of the flowers which the gardener had cut for her, and to arrange them according to her taste. The library was the principal scene of operations.

Mr. Arden had a passion for flowers, and encouraged his daughter to place them freely about his reading-table, that he might have them breathing over him their inspiring fragrance.

Caroline lingered after she had completed her task. Like her father she had an appreciative eye for beauty of effect, and an artistic taste for the harmonious blending of colours.

"What a difference a few flowers make in a room." This was her reflection as she looked round; adding, as she glanced at a bunch of bouvardias which remained from her bouquet, "James has been so liberal this morning that the supply exceeds the demand; the vases are full; where shall I find a place for them? Ah, I have an idea; this is Mr. Elliott's last day, I will leave them on his table."

Opening from the library was a pretty little room, that Mr. Arden called his study, and which he had considerably placed at Lionel's service during his stay at Lowfield. There the young sculptor worked at his art, creating and developing his ideas in preparation for the great work by which he hoped to establish his reputation. Her mind would hence-

forth always associate that little studious nook of her father's with Lionel Elliott. Gently she pushed open the door, and stole in with the flowers in her hand. As she expected, no one was there; but might she not be in danger of a surprise from Lionel, who had rather a trick of making unexpected appearances, she knew he had concluded his labours at the Hall, but did not know how he had disposed of himself that morning, only she fancied he had gone out with her father and brother; if so, she would be quite safe from interruption, yet there was the uncertainty and the risk, which, perhaps, gave a piquant attraction to the situation.

Her hand trembled slightly as she arranged the flowers, wondering if Lionel would notice them when he came in, or if he would care for the tardy attention which had waited until the last day of his visit to give him a mark of remembrance. Once she stood irresolute whether to withdraw them, and the thought flashed through her mind—"Perhaps it would be better not to leave them; slight as the act is, he may give it a meaning which it can never have for him. But no, a few flowers cannot surely bring harm to either of us; they shall stay."

She moved softly about the room which was full of the sculptor and his works, gathering up her dress, that it might not disturb any of his possessions, and carefully picking her way among the art litter which he had accumulated round him in his impromptu studio. She had glanced at everything, and was turning to leave the room, when her attention was suddenly attracted by something which she had till then overlooked—a head or bust placed apart from the rest, and covered with a large silk handkerchief.

"What could it be that required such special care?" An irresistible impulse of curiosity made Caroline answer this query for herself, and draw aside the cover. She did so, and revealed a small female head which seemed to have just received the finishing touch of the chisel;—a graceful, finely-poised head that might have served for a Greek model. She knew it at once—her own likeness carved from memory, and worked at in secret as a labour of love; for the sculptor seemed to have thrown into the inanimate marble the whole soul of his beautiful art. No wonder that her cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkled. She would have been less than woman if she had not felt all the subtle homage, and understood the delicate flattery, to which it had given expression.

She had not yet recovered from her astonishment, but stood still with one corner of the handkerchief in her hand, gazing with parted lips and wondering eyes at this faithful copy of herself, when she was startled by hearing the library door open and close, and turning hastily, saw Lionel Elliott standing on the threshold.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE DOCTOR'S VERDICT.

THE mysterious Godfrey Marlow, who seemed at any time able to command an interview with Mr. Fenwick, went away as he came, without either of the sisters being the wiser for his visit; but keen-sighted Barbara did not fail to observe that, as on a former occasion, his coming seemed to throw her father out of his groove,—that for several days he ate with diminished appetite, and gave way to frequent fits of despondency. Mr. Fenwick's eldest daughter was undeniably a clever tactician, but it was in vain that she tried to turn her talent to account, and in the course of conversation with her father adroitly managed to throw in certain chance allusions by way of leading up to the subject. He was too wary to commit himself by a single word, and only added another link to the chain of perplexity by his guarded manner and scrupulous avoidance of all topics that might be suspected of dangerous tendencies.

It was of no avail that the sisters talked it over in confidence, and united their efforts to puzzle out a clue to the mystery. Nothing transpired to enlighten them, and their stream of life settled back to its old calm, the little incident which had given it a momentary ruffle of agitation being almost forgotten, except by Barbara, upon whose mind it left the most vivid impression.

Though living in a fashionable part of London, and apparently blessed with ample resources of wealth, the Fenwicks lived very quietly, too quietly, as the sisters sometimes complained to their father; then would follow a spasmodic effort of gaiety in the form of evening parties. But during late years Mr. Fenwick seemed to have contracted a morbid dislike to society, and considered their annual migration to the seaside sufficient change for the girls. The proposed visit of his brother-in-law was looked forward to with some nervous anxiety; their last meeting had been at the deathbed of his sister, Mrs. Ashton, and apart from the natural sorrow which belonged to that bereavement, there were other associations which made that time doubly painful for Mr. Fenwick to recall. The advent of the expected guest was also an event to the sisters, who had never seen their uncle since they were children. On the night of his arrival they could not exactly determine what impression he gave them, except that they thought him dreadfully thin and pale. They saw very little of him on that first evening, for the exhaustion of the day's journey made him unable to do more than exchange a few civilities, and retire to the room which had been prepared for him. Barbara expressed herself pleased and surprised at the cultivated refinement of his manner, but dwelt somewhat disparagingly on his personal appearance; while Louisa, with a shadow on

her bright face, and her lively voice subdued, spoke of his ill-health, and wondered what the doctor's opinion would be.

Mr. Fenwick said nothing, but on the pretext that he had important business letters to write before bedtime, he shut himself in the little parlour where he had received Godfrey Marlow a few weeks previous, and sat out the rest of the evening in unsocial solitude, not writing, but thinking and gazing gloomily before him into the empty fire-grate.

The following day was the one fixed for Mr. Ashton's interview with the physician, whose verdict was to confirm or crush the hope to which he had clung for months, until his rapidly-failing health obliged him to take the advice of the kind-hearted rector, who offered to procure a substitute to fill his place in the school, if he would consent to make a journey to London for the purpose of consulting an eminent doctor, to whom he would furnish him with a letter of introduction, as they were personal friends.

"Well, Alfred, have you seen the doctor? but stay, you look exhausted; will you not have something to eat before we talk?"

The speaker was Mr. Fenwick; he had waited by appointment at his office in the city to receive his brother-in-law, as they had arranged to return home together.

Mr. Ashton had sunk into the chair placed for him, his hands dropping nervelessly to his side, as though the strength which had so long sustained him had nearly ebbed out. The drooping figure, with its spiritless, dejected air, and something in the expression of the white face, prepared Mr. Fenwick for the worst, even before he caught the faltered answer.

"Yes, Charles, I have seen him; but it is all over: he gives no hope."

No hope—was that to be the end? He had set out on his errand that day full of spirit and energy, as though he had taken a new hold of life.

Looking at him now, Mr. Fenwick was painfully struck with the change which told only too forcibly, that the improvement had only been a transient flash. He was visibly moved, and an involuntary impulse made him grasp his hand.

"Don't say that, Alfred; remember, it is only one man's opinion."

Mr. Ashton shook his head. "It is true, Charles; I might have known it before, but I hoped against hope, clung to every chance of life, deceiving myself as well as others with the idea that there was nothing to fear; but now I know my days are numbered, for I feel that Dr. Morton has told me the truth."

There was a few minutes' silence, broken by Mr. Fenwick. "What did he say, Alfred?"

The reply was given with a strange calmness,

considering the import of the words. "He told me that the end was uncertain; it might come upon me gradually, after lingering for months, or it might not be as many weeks. I have fought hard to keep it a secret at home, Charles. Eva has not a suspicion that anything ails me, beyond what rest and change will be able to remove. She must be told now; there will be no kindness in keeping it from her."

"Poor girl," Mr. Fenwick murmured in a tone of real feeling.

Mr. Ashton went on: "And there is my old father; it will be a hard trial for him, come when it may. I must get home as quickly as I can, Charles, for I have much work to do."

They talked some time longer, Mr. Fenwick gazing with something of awe into the pale face on which was set the seal of sorrowful resignation.

The future prospects of his daughter was the burden that seemed to lie heaviest on Mr. Ashton's mind. It was while speaking of her that his voice broke, and he showed the first signs of giving way.

"My little Eva; no rough wind has ever reached her yet—she has always been such a sheltered flower. That is my heart-ache, Charles, thinking how it will fare with her when I am gone. We cannot expect many years for the old grandfather. He will be gathered in like a sheaf of corn fully ripe for the reaper; then my child must face the world alone. Yet our good rector would tell me not alone, while God is with her. I must be sorely wanting in trust."

Mr. Fenwick seemed agitated. He spoke hurriedly:—

"Don't trouble, Alfred; Eva shall be cared for. I have given you my promise that, if I can help it, she shall never want a protector or a home. I will take her as one of my own girls, and she shall share alike with them."

"Thanks, Charles; on the faith of that promise I shall leave my darling to you, as her mother left her to me. I can trust you to keep your word."

"What, forgetting all that might well have made you doubt me, and in spite of what you could bring against me from the past, if you were not a generous fellow; but don't speak of thanks between us two, my sister's child can never be in my debt, whatever I may do. I owe it all as reparation to the dead."

"But you know that Jane forgave you from the first," Mr. Ashton faltered. His pale face seemed to be getting paler with the emotion which he was making such strong efforts to control.

"Yes, but can I forgive myself? Even in these late years, these by-gones have an unpleasant trick of haunting me. Alfred, I envy you your clear conscience. I confess now that I have often tried to make atonement, but something has always arisen to



defeat the good intention, and scatter my efforts to the winds."

At that moment they heard the sound of wheels stopping at the door. Mr. Fenwick walked to the window.

"It is the cab which I ordered to come round for us, Alfred. You have had a trying day and need rest. We will get ready to go at once."

A few minutes later the two men came out together, Mr. Ashton leaning on the arm of his brother-in-law. After he had seen him settled in

the cab, Mr. Fenwick returned to the office to fetch something he had left behind. Seen then, he had the look of a burdened man. It was the same shadowed face, with the old strain of anxiety which his daughters had remarked after his interview with Godfrey Marlow. He went back to the cab, muttering—

"I have bound myself, as it was my duty. Poor fellow, I might well say that I envied him his clear conscience. How would he judge me if he knew all?"

(*To be continued.*)

## WORDS IN SEASON.

### PROVIDENCE AND FATE.

BY THE REV. CANON BATEMAN, M.A., VICAR OF MARGATE.

**P**ROVIDENCE and Fate may have certain resemblances, but they do not belong to the same family. They have eyes; but whilst Fate is blind, Providence sees. They have hands; but led by the one we fall into the ditch, whilst guided by the other we walk safely. The countenance of the one is gloomy, foreboding, forbidding; of the other, bright, cheerful, hopeful. The one, like a clod-crusher, presses us down to the dead level of earth; the other, like a chariot of fire, raises us to the high aspirations and blessed hopes of heaven. The one pushes us with irresponsible and irresistible force to the edge of a dark, fathomless, and unknown abyss; the other draws us lovingly to a "building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The one declares that resistance is useless, that struggling does but tighten the bands and tear the flesh, that religion is merely a "cunningly devised fable," that God and man are alike chained, that the end decreed is unalterable and inevitable; the other says, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jer. x. 23, 24).

Let us disregard the words, as we disbelieve the decrees, of Fate; and let us analyse the words, as we believe the supremacy, of Providence. They may prove interesting and profitable as suggesting (1) the recognition of God as the Creator and Preserver, (2) the acknowledgment of our dependence upon him, and (3) the fitting prayer founded on that acknowledgment and recognition.

#### I.—THE CREATOR AND PRESERVER.

In these days men have risen up amongst us who do not recognise the "mighty hand of God."

They reject the teaching of the Catechism, which says that God "made me and all the world;" they withhold assent from the Liturgy, which says that God is the "Creator and Preserver" of all mankind; and hence numberless gross absurdities and baseless assumptions. "We know nothing about man's creation," they say. "Matter has always existed, and man is but one of the various forms it has assumed. He needed no God to mould him into shape. As things are, so, for the most part, they have ever been."

You hear the assumption; now mark its absurdity. Trace out the reasoning on some lower scale than man. Take some ingenious piece of mechanism—the watch you wear, for instance. That is matter, arranged evidently in a peculiar form for a peculiar purpose. You observe the division of the hours on the dial, the progress of the hands, the complicated internal machinery, the hidden spring. What is internal and hidden is intended manifestly to produce motion; and what is external and visible is as manifestly intended to mark and parcel out the twelve hours of the day and night. Now, can you by any possibility suppose that such a piece of mechanism could be self-formed and self-existent; or that it could stretch back through all eternity? Can you imagine a time-keeper before time was? Can you imagine this machine making itself—the metal calling for the fire to melt it, one wheel calling for another to turn it, the glass and dial framed and fitted by some "fortuitous concurrence of atoms?" Or could you, on the other hand, suppose a series of venerable ancestral watches existing from the beginning, and transmitting their forms and faces to their descendants in perpetual succession!

No such absurdities are admissible. You infer correctly that a work so complicated must have had a workman;—that a design so obvious must

have had a designer;—that mechanism so delicate must have had a maker: and common sense has led you to a right conclusion when you say, "Some one made that watch."

And who made man? Man manifests a design infinitely more skilful, and a mechanism infinitely more delicate, than a watch. He is "fearfully and wonderfully made." In him you have an eye to see, an ear to hear, a hand to feel, a tongue to speak, a heart to beat, a power of production and reproduction;—you have intellect, reason, will, consciousness, forebodings, aspirations, and a deep-seated sense of responsibility. True, in the dust of the earth you find the component parts of which the body is made; but did these come together of their own accord in the beginning? Did bone come to his bone, did the sinews and the flesh come up upon them, did the skin cover them, without any one to breathe the breath of life so that man should become a living soul? As in the former illustration the design proved a designer, so now the creature proves a Creator; and any other solution involves a mass of absurdities and contradictions without end. The credulity of unbelief is almost incredible. It rejects Revelation, and yet clings to theories in comparison with which Revelation is simplicity itself.

But others assert that man is but a development. The polypus or the fungus, or the germ, instinct with life, put out some feelers, and these gradually became arms; by efforts at movement it produced feet; by stretching itself it became erect; by lengthened experience it became wise; and thus, by lapse of time, it was developed into man! So with animals; so with vegetables; so with all that has life in its varied forms. Give time enough to the philosophers—hundreds of millions of ages—and all these things, they say, will come to pass!

It is to be presumed, then, that the same process is still going on; for it goes on without God, and, once begun, how can it cease? Why, then, do we never see the slightest trace of the process of this development? There must be everywhere the half-way house—the time when man and animal and plant are half-developed. And yet, who ever saw it? Who ever met with instinct half-developed into reason and conscious responsibility? Who ever saw a vegetable attempting to walk? Who ever saw a prostrate animal becoming erect? There are many anomalies in Nature, but they remain anomalies. The lines of distinction between the animal and vegetable kingdoms are very fine, but they do not run into one another. The monkey-god of India, worshipped thousands of years ago, has identically the same size, form, and character as the same animal tolerated and

dominant in every Indian village now; so that the lapse of thousands of years has produced no development, no nearer approach to man. A plant improves by cultivation, but it remains a plant still; an animal improves by careful breeding, but it remains an animal still; knowledge increases, and men run to and fro, but they remain men still. Yes, and trace back far as you will, you will still find them as they came from that "mighty hand" that created them. Science shows many difficulties and mysteries when this is acknowledged, but not half so many as when it is denied.

And then there is one question which, unanswered (and it is unanswerable), is fatal to the whole theory—Whence *Life* in the germ? It is supposed to be instinct with life:—who gave it? There is God still: for he is the Author and Giver of Life. The theory of development does not suffice, even if it was desired, to put him out of his own world!

The secret of LIFE, then, must be discovered; and in order to this the minute hair of the nettle leaf or stem is manipulated with infinite care and skill, and when stripped of its outer sheath, is placed under a most powerful microscope. A colourless fluid, composed of certain chemical elements, is discovered in rapid and tempestuous motion. That is pronounced to be Life. Life is a form of matter; and the origin and first cause of all phenomena connected with it, and springing from it, is brought to light! The meaning is hidden under the word Protoplasm, and the problem is considered solved. Life is material: and the supernatural may be henceforth ignored!

Now for all intents and purposes (save the useful one, in the present case, of mystery) the gnarled and gigantic branch of the oak would have done as well as the minute hair of the nettle stem. For what they call Life and Protoplasm, we call Sap and Circulation. Motion is not life. Let the branch be severed from the parent trunk, or let the nettle be uprooted from the nursing-ground, and all motion will gradually cease, and instead of life, you will find death.

As men thus and in this way would deny the Creator, so would they sometimes deny the Preserver of man. "All things," they say, "proceed by fixed, immovable, and unalterable laws. The earth has always revolved, and never stopped; water has always flowed, and never stood on a heap; iron has always sunk, and never was known to swim; the dial has always gone forwards, and never backwards; the body has always died, but never risen. All the laws of Nature are fixed, and have never been disturbed. If God really

did arrange them at the first, he left them self-supporting and self-controlling; they need not, and they admit not, of interference."

Now, that Nature, so to speak, works uniformly, we perceive; that God willed it should be so, we believe; that uniformity becomes by long continuance a Law, we admit. As the sun rose at first, so, no doubt, it rises now; as water flowed at first, so it flows now; as fire burned at first, so it burns now. All these are facts evident to all. But they do not touch the equally evident fact, that whilst matter is bound, the Will is free; that whilst matter obeys, the Spirit commands; and that not in single actions only, but in all the occurrences of daily life.

Over the world of a man's own conscious actions the Mind, or Spirit, presides—guiding, controlling, directing, governing all; and in proportion as that mind is strong or weak, wise or foolish, impulsive or far-seeing, does order or disorder prevail in the little world of self.

As thus the spirit rules the body, so God rules the world. He speaks, and it is done; he commandeth, and it stands fast. All things move uniformly so long as he wills that it shall be so; but when he sees it good to interfere, the course of Nature is turned or checked. He confounded the speech of the Babel-builders, and scattered those who otherwise would have remained together. He drowned with a flood that world, which otherwise would have remained as at the beginning. He delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt by mighty signs, who would otherwise have remained in cruel bondage. He commanded the sun to stand still at the word of Joshua, which otherwise would have hastened to go down. He sent back the shadow of the dial of

Ahaz, which otherwise would have followed the onward movement of the sun. He fulfilled his word to his servants the prophets; and sent his Son into the world to save sinners. He endued the apostles, whom he had chosen, with power from on high. He established his Gospel, and founded his Church upon the rock. He called men from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. All these things are the work of his "mighty hand."

Especially are we told that God holds in his hand four things, four sore judgments—"the sword, the famine, the noisome beast, and the pestilence." Have we not seen the proof, even in our days? Have we not seen a mysterious disease withering and blackening the food upon the fields before our eyes, and defying all the researches of skill and science to trace the cause or suggest the remedy? Have we not seen famine, despite all the resources at the command of our rulers, decimating a sister island? Have we not drifted, and have not others rushed into war, even whilst saying, "Peace, peace?" Has not the pestilential cholera carried off its thousands from amongst us? Has not a subtle and mysterious plague destroyed our cattle, and passed with a deadly influence over the length and breadth of our land? Has not God thus shown us that these and all things are in his mighty hand; and should not the duty of recognising it be engrafted deeply in all our hearts? Let us ever recognise the Lord our Governor, whose name is excellent in all the earth. To break from our allegiance, to cast aside his yoke, to defy his power, to leave him out of our counsels, is mere folly—whilst to humble ourselves under that mighty hand is true wisdom.

(To be continued.)

## THE BROOKLET.

**F**AR away in a hidden dell,  
Where the gorse and the violets know me well;  
Under the grasses, long and green,

A tremulous thing I first am seen.

Then through the meadows and through the wood,

And over the boulders, big and brown,

Away, away on my mission of good,

I speed to the heart of the weary town.

The daisy looks up with laughing eye;

The bee hums loud as I pass it by;

And the lark and linnet have each a song—

A welcome of love as I glide along.

And the village maid, from the stepping-stone,

Looks down at her form in my glassy breast,

And smiles that the vision is dear to one—

To one of all others she loves the best.

Then under the stones of the busy street,

Under the tread of a million feet,

Onward in darkness I take my way,

Till I leap again to the light of day.

And lo! and lo! like a message from Him,

A blessing I come to the sons of men—

A joy in the shadow of houses grim,

As I was afar in my native glen.

MATTHIAS BARR.

## CURIOSITIES OF PARISH REGISTERS.

IN TWO PARTS.

## PART II.

**THAT** parish registers were even from their first institution considered to be records of very great importance, is evident from the care taken about them from time to time by the Legislature. The canon of James I. gives the following directions, with penalties on failure of observance:—"The register shall be kept in the church in a coffer, with three keys for the minister and each of the churchwardens, and that on the Sunday the minister and each of the churchwardens shall make the entries of the week before; to every page (when filled) they shall all subscribe their names, and the churchwardens shall every year transmit a copy thereof to the bishop's registry." And the non-observance of the directions of the canon was liable to be visited with a heavy penalty, for we find it enacted by a statute, 6 and 7 William III., that "The minister neglecting to make the proper entries in the parochial register shall forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds."

And yet, notwithstanding the care taken by the Legislature on the subject, it is positively amazing to find how little care was in many places taken of them, and what extraordinary blunders were made in some of the entries. Sometimes the books were left altogether to the care of the parish clerk, with the understanding that he should make the entries; and as that function was generally discharged, especially in the last century, by a person who could scarcely read or write his own name, much less that of other people, it is not to be wondered at that some of the names were entered in such a manner as to leave the owners of them as unknown to the next generation as if they had never existed.

The following *bond-fide* parish register entries are given as a specimen of the manner in which the work was sometimes done; and if not instructive, they are at least amusing:—"Thomas Rawling's wife; Dorothy Giffard's daughter; A prentice of Mr. Sliford; Dr. Johnson's lady; Old Father Beadle; Old Father Eritage; Goodwife Goodell; Old Mother Pummell; Mother Studdy; Gannmer Smith; Old Goodwife Lewes; Black John; Farmer Browne; Tippling Tomlinson; The Widow Michell, from the Ames H. (almshouse); An oul man from the W. H. (workhouse)."

Some remarkable instances are given in a curious old work upon the subject, written more than a century ago by Ralph Bigland, Somerset Herald:—

"I once had occasion," he says, "to consult the

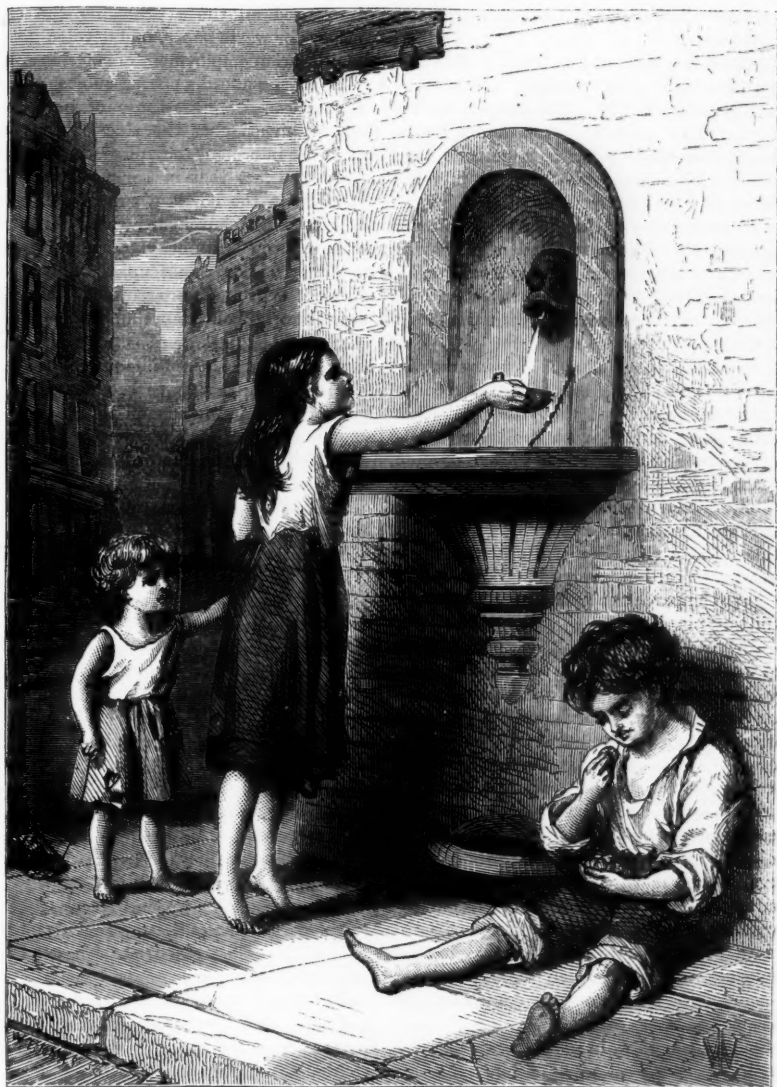
register of ———, in the county of ———, when I was directed to the cottage of a poor labouring man, as clerk of the parish. He not being at home, I informed the children of what I wanted, upon which they pulled out the drawer of an old table, where, among much rubbish of rusty iron, &c., I found the register, greatly injured by the handling, perhaps, of his children, &c.; and, had any one an interest therein, might have either altered or carried it off without discovery.

"This puts me in mind of another yet more flagrant instance of abuse, concerning the register of the parish of ———, in the county of ———; that the clerk, being a taylor (*sic*) and keeper of the registers (according to common report in the parish), so often as he wanted slips of parchment for measures, made no scruple to cut out of the old written register sixteen leaves and something more for that purpose. The register was a large folio, and appears formerly to have consisted of eighteen leaves. There lately remained but one whole leaf and two bits, containing entries from the year 1633 to 1639, and some odd dates from that time to 1645."

Even when the entries were correctly made, it was sometimes by no means easy to obtain proof of them. For instance, the minister of a certain parish was desired to consult his register for a certain name about a given time. He answered by letter that no such name could be found. He was desired a second time to consult the register, and again the same answer was returned. Some time afterwards a stranger happened to look into the register and found the name required. It turned out, upon explanation, that the minister had never examined the register himself, but had requested the clerk to do so, and the latter was *more than half blind*.

In Nugent Bell's narrative of the restoration to the Huntingdon Peerage in 1821—a work of genealogical research which affords a signal example of the maxim that truth is stranger than fiction—the author gives more than one amusing account of his difficulties in making proper searches in parish registers, from which it was necessary that evidence in support of the claim should be collected. "As I had learned at Hinton," he says, "that all the baptisms and deaths which occurred there were registered, I deemed it prudent to inspect the registry of the parish. . . . In making the extracts necessary for my purpose, I found that the early registries of this parish had been destroyed, as I





"A blessing I come to the sons of men—  
A joy in the shadow of houses grim"—p. 10"

was informed, by the late curate's wife, who made *kettle-holders* of them, and would most likely have consumed the whole parish archives in this homely way, but that the fortunate and timely interference of the present clerk rescued what now remains from destruction."

Mr. Cole, in his MSS. in the British Museum, mentions that the registry of the Consistorial Court of the diocese of Ely, a large quarto volume written on vellum, containing 162 double pages, was purchased as waste paper at a grocer's shop at Cambridge, together with forty or fifty old books belonging to the registry of Ely. Some volumes of the registry of Clapham are mentioned by Lysons, in his "*Environs of London*," as having been sold as waste paper. After considerable searching, the rector traced them to a chandler's shop, whence they were rescued with the loss of but a few leaves.

From *Notes and Queries* for 1857 we extract the following:—"On visiting the village school of Colton, it was discovered that the Psalters of the children were covered with the leaves of the parish register. Some of these were recovered, and replaced in the church chest; but many were totally obliterated and put away. This discovery led to further investigation, which brought to light a practice of the parish clerk and schoolmaster of the day, who, to certain favoured 'goodies' of the village gave the parchment leaves for hutkins for their knitting-pins."

The earliest register book of Kingston-on-Thames was a few years ago in the catalogue of a sale by Puttick and Simpson, and that of North Elmham in Norfolk, was purchased by a stranger and restored to the parish. This prepares us for learning that when the late Dr. Burnaby once asked to see the register of a parish, he was told that they had but the one produced; that they had had another some time before, but that it was very old, and quite out of date, for none of the neighbours could read it, and that it had been tossed about in the church until either some workmen or children had carried it away, or torn it to pieces. To this there is a parallel case in the early registers of Appledore, in Kent, which were "*kept at a public-house, to be shown*, as they contained some curious entries, &c."

Mr. Southerden Burn, in his elaborate "*History of Parish Registers*," a work of much research and interest, and to which we are indebted for many of the following extracts from Registers, tells us that a clergyman in Northamptonshire discovered at the house of one of his parishioners an old parchment register sewed together as a *covering for the tester of a bedstead*.

The foregoing are but a few of the losses and vicissitudes of parish registers which are upon record. We will give one more instance, that of

the parish register of South Otterington, which contained several entries relating to the great families of Talbot, Herbert, and Falconer. The books were at one time kept in the cottage of the parish clerk, who "used all those preceding the eighteenth century for waste paper, and devoted not a few to the utilitarian employment of *singeing a goose*!"

The entries afford a special subject of interest in themselves. Amongst those of burials, we find frequent mention of the side of the church at which the interment took place. This is accounted for by the fact that in some parts of England, especially in the north, a superstition exists that the part of the churchyard which lies to the north of the church is unlucky. In some parishes this spot was almost unoccupied, whilst the other parts of the ground were crowded. Mr. Burn supposes the origin of this prejudice to be the idea that "the northern part was that appropriated for the interment of unbaptised infants, of persons excommunicated, or that have been executed, or that have laid violent hands on themselves. It was sometimes called "*the wrong side of the church*."

The following are a few of the more remarkable entries of burials:—

At Hart, in Durham. "Feb. 12, 1641. Old Mother Midnight buried."

At St. Anne's, Blackfriars. "1580, March 21, William, fool to my Lady Jerningham."

At Egglecliffe, Durham. "1638, Henry Nicholson, commonly called Old Harry of Egglecliffe, was buried."

At Sproxtton, Leicestershire. "1768, Tom a-Bedlam, buried Dec. 22."

At Kylloe, in Northumberland. "Bur. Dec. 7, 1696, Henry, y<sup>e</sup> son of Henry Watson of Fenwick, who lived to the age of 36 years, and was so great a fool that he never could put on his own close, nor never went a quarter of a mile off y<sup>e</sup> house in all this space."

At Salehurst, in Sussex. "1683, Oct. 5, Bur<sup>d</sup>. Peter Sparke, aged 120 odd years."

In some registers we find traces of the custom, on the part of the officiating minister, of exacting gifts at the time of burial. These taxes, called mortuaries or corse presents, consisted, according to Fuller, of the second best live beast of which the party died possessed. In the case of poorer persons, however, the parsons appear to have been contented with what they could get. For instance, in the parish register of Ripe occur the following entries:—

"William Wade, who died as a stranger, for whose mortuary, I, John Goffe, parson of Ripe, had his upper garment, which was an old coate, and I received for the same 6s."

"1634. I buried Alice Whitesides, Feb. 22<sup>d</sup>, who being but one week in the parish of Ripe, died as a stranger, for whose mortuary I, John

Goffe, had a gowne of Elizabeth, her daughter, price 10<sup>s</sup>."

At Burnham, in Buckinghamshire, the following entries are in the register:—

"The Queen's Footman's Child. 24 Aug., 1750."

"The Queen's Launder. 3 Nov., 1575."

"Snow's Wife. 30 March, 1584."

"A Runagate Wench, 4 Jan., 1587-8."

"Maude, the Child of a Roague. 9 May, 1586."

At Great Carbrook, Norfolk:—

"1625. Mary, daughter of Edward Cathedral, Minister of Carbrook, and Faith his Wife, died the 9th of August.

"Tho' in this Book of Death thou beest recorded,  
Thy part i' th' Book of Life thou art awarded."

At Bowes, in Yorkshire:—

"Rodger Wrightson, Jun., and Martha Railton, both of Bowes, buried in one grave; he died in a fever, and upon tolling his passing-bell she cried out, 'My heart is broke,' and in a few hours expired, purely, as was supposed, from love. Aged about twenty years each. Bur. 15 Mar., 1714."

Not to weary our readers, we will conclude our extracts from registers of burials, quoting but two or three more entries, one from the register of Helmsley, which is *verbatim et literatim* as follows:—

"Burials 1687, April 17th. George vilans Lord dooke of bookingham."

And the other from that of Richmond, in Yorkshire, which is mysterious and laconic:—

"30 Aug., 1688. Cuddy with spoons!"

In the parish register of Tunstall, Kent, occurs an entry, which shows that even the patience of a parish clerk has its limits. It runs thus:—

"1557. Mary Pottman, nat. & bapt., 15 Apr.

"Mary Pottman, n. & b., 29 June.

"Mary Pottman, sep. 22 Aug., 1567.

"From henceforward I omit the Pottmans."

But although the primary and, indeed, the only legitimate purpose of parish registers was to furnish a record of births, deaths, and marriages, it would seem that they were frequently used as occasional memorandum-books, in which the minister or clerk made the most miscellaneous entries. Of these the following are a few examples:—

At Bow Brickhill, "Frank Bradford agrees to keep the church in repair of glass for 3<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>d</sup> annually."

At Barrington Parva, in Gloucestershire, where one Thomas Lambe was vicar towards the close of the seventeenth century, that reverend gentleman made the following entry:—

"Mem. that on Oct. 6, 1695, I payd my Butcher 5<sup>d</sup> 5<sup>s</sup>, my Baker 1<sup>d</sup> 10<sup>s</sup>, my Brewer 1<sup>d</sup> 10<sup>s</sup>, all in gold, taking in change 9<sup>s</sup>

"O Rare Parson Tom."

It may not be out of place here to mention a curious entry, which, although not in the register book itself, occurs in the churchwardens' accounts of Chelsea parish:—

"1670. Spent at the Perambulation

Dinner ... .. 3 10 0

Given to the boys that were

whipt ... .. 0 4 0

Paid for Poynts for the

Boys ... .. 0 2 0"

The explanation of which is that in former days small boys were flogged periodically at the parish boundaries, in order to impress them on their memories.

Here is an explanatory (?) note from the register of Allhallows, London Wall, which our readers will probably agree in thinking leaves confusion worse confounded:—

"The last marriage is Feb. 2, 1580-1; the next April 30, 1581. Here endeth the yeare of our Lorde 1580, and hereafter foloweth the yeare of our Lorde 1581, and is as in the next leaf is to be seen. So that there is no more marriages than ye here see; and therefore doth make they are so to end and the other so to begynn; not that begynning and endyng of the yere is so, but that the one is the last that was in that yere, and the other the first that was to begynne the other yere, which is as foloweth. 1581. Exce."

Astronomical and meteorological events were often recorded in the registers. For instance, in that of Crowhurst parish, in Sussex:—"A blazing star appeared in the kedom in y<sup>e</sup> yeare 1680. It did first show itself 10th of December y<sup>e</sup> yeare 80 which did stream from y<sup>e</sup> south west to y<sup>e</sup> middle of y<sup>e</sup> heaven broader y<sup>a</sup> a Raine Bow by farre and continued till y<sup>e</sup> latter end of February." From that and the following entry we may conclude that an accurate knowledge of astronomy was not commonly among the accomplishments of parish clerks a couple of centuries ago. At St. Andrew's, Newcastle, we read in the register:—"The sun and the mune was in the clips betwixt nin and ten in the morning, and was darkish about three quarters of a nour—Sep. 13, 1699."

An old rector of Worldham parish appears to have had a turn for compiling statistics, for we read in the register:—

"1621-2 Mem: That at this present, viz., June 9th, there are in Worldham parish ten women living who have had buried 15 husbands, of which women two are married again and 8 remain widows, which 8 have had buried 13 husbands, and might perhaps have had buried many more if they had had them, but all the men in Worldham parish at this time living have had buried but 3 wives."

In this paper we have almost exclusively confined

our extracts to amusing or eccentric entries in the registers. It would not be fair to omit to mention that many contain evidences of the piety and wisdom of their custodians. Witness the following entry in the register of Ruyton of the Eleven Towns, Salop:—

"No flattery here, where to be born and die  
Of rich and poor is all the history.  
Enough if virtue fill'd the space between,  
Prov'd by the ends of being to have been."

One more extract will fitly conclude this paper. It is from the register of the Abbey, Tewkesbury,

and breathes the very spirit of the simple piety of the Elizabethan age:—

"Lo heere thou maiest with mortall eie beholde  
Thy name recorded by a mortall righte;  
But if thou canste looke but spiritualis  
Unto that God which gives such heauynly sighte,  
Thou maiest behold w<sup>th</sup> comfort to thy soule  
Thy name recorded in the Heauynly Roule.  
And therefore praie the Register of heauen  
To write thy name within the Book of Life,  
And also praie thy sins may be forgiuen,  
And t<sup>h</sup> at thou maiest flee all sinn and strife  
That when thy mortall bodie shall have ende  
Thy soule may to the Imortal Lord assende."

## LOTTIE BLAKE.

### PART II.



POLICEMAN! Why did they want a policeman? It could not have anything to do with Lottie."

So queried poor Clement in his bewilderment. At that moment his stunned senses were sharpened into clearer comprehension by the question—

"Who are you, boy, and what do you want here?"

"I am Clement Blake, and I want my sister. Why do you keep hold of her arm?"

The stern man answered him—"If you want to be told what you probably know already, this young sister of yours must be detained here until a policeman comes. She has to answer for trying to pass a bad five-shilling piece."

A low cry broke from the girl's quivering lips.

"Oh, believe me, sir, I did not know the money was bad when I brought it here. I—I—"

Here she was interrupted by Clem.

"Never mind, Lottie; nobody has a right to blame you. It wasn't your fault, and they shall take my life before they do you any harm."

A deep blush burned in the boy's face, and his breast heaved with excitement.

In genuine feeling of any kind there is something to command respect. The two shopmen whispered together, with pitying glances towards the brother and sister. It was clear that their sympathies were veering round, and they began to hesitate in their opinions about Lottie's guilt. But the cold, matter-of-fact master kept firm; he could not allow himself to be impressed either with Clem's earnestness or the handsome dark face and fine full-orbed eyes of the girl culprit.

"What do you know about it, boy?" he questioned, coldly.

"Everything," returned the lad, proudly, drawing up his head. "A little while since I thought that five shillings would be a blessing to us, now I wish we had never seen it. The gentleman gave it to me, not to Lottie: so if one of us is to go to prison, it must be me."

Here Lottie's voice struck in, sharp, imploring, eager, as though petitioning for some favour to herself.

"No, no; not my brother; it would kill him. He only wants to take my place and save me. But he can't—he ought not, for he had nothing to do with paying the money; that was all myself. I have told you the truth. If you will send me to prison, I must go, but it has nothing to do with Clem; you must not stop him from going home."

"Nothing to do with me, Lottie? What are you saying? If you go, I must. We've always been together, and you know I'm no use without you. Besides, I can't go home to-night and leave you behind."

It was a touching struggle of love and self-sacrifice, each pleading to be allowed to suffer in the other's place. Even the master was moved by what he saw and heard; perhaps it was something new in his experience of human nature. He began to relax his strong desire to protect the pockets of society and further the ends of justice, and if it had not been for the imagined necessity of sustaining his reputation for firmness, he would have withdrawn his order for the policeman. He removed his hold from the girl's arm, and as though apologising for what he was doing, spoke with more kindness than he had yet used.

"I hope it will turn out as you say, young woman. I'm sorry—very sorry; but we've had so many cases of this kind lately, and the interests of justice can't be overlooked."

The policeman was at the door. Lottie's lips whitened when she saw him, and Clem, with a wild light in his eyes, clung round his sister, as if his own fragile body could protect her against the grim guardian of the public peace.

"Don't make a scene, my boy," said the justice-loving grocer in a low tone of expostulation. "You'll do more good to your sister by going away quietly and trying to get some one to come in the morning and speak for her character. Can you get any one?"

"Oh yes," said Lottie, hastily; "there is Uncle



Simon and the forewoman where I worked off and on for more than six months; she will speak for me, if she's asked."

"I am glad of it. There, boy, that is the way you can serve your sister. If her tale is true, she will get off easily."

"Oh, if it was but morning now!" cried Clem, impetuously.

For her brother's sake, Lottie assumed a cheerfulness that she did not feel, holding his hands in a close, straining grasp, as she whispered, "Don't fret about me, Clem; but get Uncle Simon to come, and it will be all right to-morrow."

Then, freeing herself from his clinging hold, she turned with quiet dignity to face the policeman, who looked from one to the other, as if puzzled at the sort of prisoner who was to be given into his charge.

It was only at the door of the police-station that Clement would consent to be torn from his sister; then, gathering under his arm the guitar which she had delivered to him, he sped wildly along the streets in the direction of home, full of one purpose, which alone kept him from sinking down and forgetting everything in the utter abandonment of grief and despair. But there was work for him to do on the morrow—work for Lottie; whatever came, she must be saved from that place of untold terrors—prison.

It was past midnight when old Simon Reeve, sleeping in his chair before the dead embers of fire, waked himself with a sudden jerk of his head, and slowly rubbing his eyes, rose to his feet, feeling stiff and cold, and looked round the room with a slightly bewildered air; then, rousing to full consciousness of realities, he remembered that the boy and girl had gone out, and he had been sitting up for them.

"Wonder what they mean by keeping out like this, and making me lose my sleep, after a hard day's tramp," he growled, as he opened the door, letting in a waft of keen, cold air from the passage that made him shrink back into the room. "And my oil burning to waste all this time," he added, catching sight of the lamp which he had forgotten to turn down. "They'll be the ruin of me, but it shan't last; I've made up my mind, and now I'll lock up. If they can't come in at decent hours, they may find other lodgings."

In spite of his expressed determination, the old man did not go to bed, but walked aimlessly about the room, rubbing his numbed hands, restless and uneasy, he did not know why.

"What has become of the young fools? It wasn't my doing that they went." This he muttered between his teeth.

The truth was that, with all his hardness and greed for gain, some stray bit of human feeling was tagging at his heart-strings, and certain whispers

of conscience were clamorous to be heard. He would not have acknowledged it, but he felt a great relief when a knock sounded at the street door, though all his grumbling ill-humour returned when he went to open it. Before he could draw back the rusty bolt, the knock was repeated. "Patience, patience," he growled surlily; "you must wait my time now."

The next moment Clement rushed in breathless, panting, with a wild haggard face that looked ghastly in the light of the old man's lamp. Simon Reeve stood in the open doorway, with his face to the cutting wind, trying to peer forward into the gloom of the night, as he said irritably—

"Why doesn't she come in, it's late enough? and what do you both mean by—"

He was interrupted by Clem's gasping reply.

"Lottie isn't there, uncle; she'll not come here at all to-night."

"Not come!" repeated the old man, almost dropping the lamp in his surprise. He let the door close with a clang, and followed the boy into the room with hurried steps; he had not prepared himself for bad news of Lottie. He had always found her more difficult to manage than the boy, her high spirit often chafed against the angles of his temper: still she was his favourite.

It did not take many minutes for Clem to tell his tale of the night's calamity.

"I said this singing freak would bring no good," muttered the old man. "Locked up for the night, that's bad enough for a girl like Lottie; the fellow that gave the money knew well enough what he was doing."

"Oh, uncle, I don't think so; he looked so hard at me, and I liked his face. I fancy he lives in that square, and just before it comes light I'm going back to watch for him, and stay till it's time for you to go with me to Lottie."

The old man objected to this as a wild-goose errand, but Clem had made up his mind—it was for Lottie's sake and it must be tried. Before the day dawned he had taken his station in the square, to wait and watch with his wan, white face, full of keen, hungry anxiety that made it painful to look at. At last when the working city had fairly begun, and he was beginning to despair, a brougham drove round the corner and stopped at one of the houses, as if waiting for some one. After a few seconds the door opened, and—could it be that such good fortune was for him?—he saw, and recognised the tall gentleman who had given him the five shillings. Quick as thought, before he had time to step into his carriage, Clem was at his side. At first he seemed at a loss to understand the words and gestures of the excited boy; then Clem, with his heart beating wildly, and his lips dry and feverish with agitation, explained, "My sister had a guitar, and was singing in the

square last night; you came past and gave me a five-shilling piece; we were so glad, because we had got no money. Lottie went to change it at a grocer's shop, and they made a policeman take her to prison, because it was bad." The sentence concluded in a sob.

"This is very serious," said the gentleman, looking at him in evident distress. "I remember the circumstance now." He had changed a sovereign a short time before, and had put the loose silver into his pocket without looking it over. "My poor lad, I'm sorry for you and your sister; but as far as reparation is possible it shall be made. But stay," he added, placing his fingers on Clem's wrist, "you are ill from exhaustion, and must come into my house and take what I give you. Make your mind easy, and leave your sister to me."

He kept his word. The first case disposed of at the police-station that morning was that of Lottie Blake, who was acquitted clear from all suspicion, thanks to the powerful testimony and timely interference of Dr. Latham, the wealthy physician, who had inadvertently been the cause of her trouble.

The grocer was inclined to regret his officious zeal when he learned the true state of affairs, for Dr. Latham was one of the magnates of the neighbourhood to whom he habitually cringed. But out

of evil came good to the brother and sister, which dated from their strange introduction to the benevolent doctor, who did not let the work of reparation end with his journey to and from the police-station. He set himself to relieve their necessities, indulging his growing liking for Clem by having him nursed into better health, then provided him with teachers, and after a time received him into his house to fill the office of junior assistant. Lottie had also the good fortune to win for herself the favour of Mrs. Latham, who was not behind her kind husband in large-hearted, and, as some of their friends said, rather eccentric, charity. Touched by what she had heard of the devotion of the brother and sister, she decided that they should not be separated, and offered Lottie a situation in her own nursery, which was gladly accepted. It was not long before the young girl was enabled to pay off with interest the debt to Uncle Simon. The old man's heart was wonderfully softened by the turn which affairs had taken. He still lived in the tumble-down house, made his plaster casts, and scraped and saved; but often on winter evenings when he sat by his solitary fire, he wished that he could have Lottie Blake and her brother back again, and fretfully acknowledged that the place had never looked the same, since they left it.

### THE CHILDREN'S FETE.



SWANNECK is one of the suburbs of a large manufacturing town in the north of England, and though spoken of by some as "the village," it exhibits few or none of the characteristics we naturally connect with that title. We find in it a "Green Lane" and a "Rockmount," but they turn out to be dingy streets instead of country walks, and no one pining for fresh air and rural pleasures would think of coming to Swanneck.

The Superintendent of the Swanneck Sunday-school was an old friend of mine, and came one night to ask me to be present at the yearly treat given to the children. It was to be held at Beechlawn, a pretty place in the neighbourhood, the use of which had been kindly offered by the ladies to whom it belonged.

At first I refused, not feeling I should be of much use, but my objections were overruled, and the next day found me setting off, hoping that I might not prove an incumbrance instead of a help.

We had agreed that I should not be expected to remain longer than three hours, so I reflected that whether I succeeded or failed, the trial would soon be over.

Of course, in all English outdoor amusements

the weather is a source of anxiety, but the most nervous pleasure-seeker could have found no cause of foreboding in the cloudless sky that greeted our eyes that day. Bright, but not glaring—warm, but not oppressive, it was a very model of a day. Nature seemed for once thoroughly sympathetic, and as desirous as we were that this should prove to the children a day of brightness, of happiness, of freedom from care.

We are, perhaps, all too apt to forget that a holiday to a poor child does not mean accompanying its parents for a month's touring, or yachting, or luxurious sea-side idleness; but just one single day snatched out of its busy little toiling life. For many of these children were already breadwinners, all of them lived grave, occupied, unchildlike lives. Some worked at a rope-walk in the neighbourhood; some went to the mill; others went out as juvenile charwomen, and the remainder were, with occasional intervals of school-going, kept at home, "minding the house and taking care of baby, whilst mother is out washing and cleaning at gentlefolk's houses."

This said process of "minding the house," struck me as pathetically absurd. Again and again the poor little creature left in charge was itself a mere infant of six years old, quite incapable of preventing

the toddling child of two from playing with fire, water, and knives, its favourite and most attainable toys, the use of which was pretty sure to lead to the destruction of life, limb, or property; and when we remember the thousand-and-one wants, on the satisfaction of which the very life of a newly-born child depends, "taking care of baby" is also seen to be a pleasing fiction.

But I have wandered away from the children's treat to the children's homes. It was past two o'clock when I reached Beechlawn, and found the big van containing the scholars at the gate. There are few more charming sights than a well-kept English garden, and the man who planned Beechlawn must have been a real artist, for he had so broken the outlines by the grouping of the trees that none but the initiated even guessed how limited were its boundaries. In the eyes of the children it seemed quite an extensive place, and it was amusing to watch the little groups as they walked round, and to listen to the bursts of admiration which broke from them as their attention was drawn first to a bed of exquisite blushing roses, and then to one of quaint, elegant grasses. All these wonders were of British growth; the roses might be seen in any cottage garden, and the grasses were unnoticed in every meadow; but to these little town-bred children they seemed all equally strange. Painfully well-versed in machinery of various kinds, they were totally ignorant of the names and looks of the commonest flowers.

For the first half hour the novelties around riveted their attention, and they rushed about from flower to flower, like so many bees; but by-and-by we saw the sweets begin to pall, and they needed a change of amusement. We, therefore, carried them all off into the adjoining field, where the boys at once took possession of the bats and balls we had brought with us, and were from that moment happy and employed.

But there remained about fifty girls, for whom no cricket was attainable; and, for once, I thoroughly sympathised with those earnest ladies who never weary of urging on us the claims of the surplus women of Great Britain. Those fifty girls, hanging listlessly about, impressed me with a dull terror as to what would be done in the end, if the beginning of the so-called treat appeared appalling.

In the meantime there was nothing for it but to organise games of some kind. We found "round and round the mulberry bush" was popular, and in a few minutes had formed the fifty unemployed girls into four large circles. For a while all went well. From the "mulberry bush" they went on to "bull in the ring," and thence to an awful variation called "frog in the ring." In this, the unhappy "head centre" is made to abase him or her self to the ground, and to break through the constantly moving ring in a series of most agonising jumps, supposed to resemble the movements of a frog. Children's

limbs are supple, and to them the position is simply funny; but to rheumatic adults it suggests torture, so I was not sorry when I saw the interest of the game was flagging.

Whilst they were thus actively employed, and afterwards also, I was struck by the generous self-denial exercised by the older girls towards the younger ones. I saw the little nurse's enjoyment completely destroyed by the constant demands made on her attention by the infant under her care; very rarely did I hear an angry word, or see a hasty blow given in return, and there never was any of that cool, unrelenting selfishness, too often to be seen in the rich man's nursery.

We see this kind of unselfishness throughout the lives of the poor. When Mary is eight, she is willing to give up her most cherished plays at the bidding of the child who looks to her for help and care; and when she is twenty-eight, she will sit up night after night with the poor woman next door, who is sick and alone, and has no other claim upon her than that "she is neighbour unto her."

It was only a quarter-past three o'clock, and we had exhausted the children's small stock of games. It struck me to try the experiment of telling them stories. I was no little surprised by the answer I received to my offer of telling them a fairy tale: "What's *that*, teacher?" They had never heard a fairy tale! It was almost incredible; but in one way I was the gainer, for there was no fear of wearying them with twice-told tales, and I felt quite exhilarated by the idea of cultivating such fresh soil, and of introducing these little women to the enchanted world, where youth and beauty are indivisible, and virtue invariably "lives happy ever after."

I led them back into the garden, and they sat down on the beautiful lawn in front of the house. It was beautiful not only from its velvety grass, but by reason of the stately trees upon and around it. Two of them were the boast of all the country-side; they were the finest purple beeches I ever saw. There was a sort of electrical life stirring in those ever-moving leaves, which kept up a mysterious rustling accompaniment to my voice, and added to the charm of the tales of wonder and delight I proceeded to unfold. Somehow, as one rested beneath their majestic shade, all diversities of spiritual life seemed more real; and closing one's eyes, it did not seem hard to dream that fairy bands were holding their moonlight revels in one's presence.

I chose Cinderella as my commencement, because the early toils and hardships of that lovely heroine were sure to wake a response in the little hearts whose experience of life had much in common, as far as the cinders went. Long before I reached the thrilling incident of the pumpkin-carriage and the rat coachman, they had broken their line and were eagerly pressing around me. When the clock struck twelve, whilst the careless dancer was yet in the

ballroom, one great sympathising "Oh" arose, and when the glorious wedding of Cinderella and the Prince burst upon them, the author would have been a proud and happy man could he have seen their joyous, satisfied faces as they exclaimed, "That's right! eh! but it is lovely. Please, teacher, tell us another," followed.

Encouraged by my success, I recounted the adventures of "Jack and the Beanstalk," although I feared it was too thoroughly boyish a story for my exclusively feminine audience. But daring and energy, combined with a certain amount of cunning, are not quite peculiar to the male sex, and embellished by very full details of the furniture at the Castle, and of Mrs. Giant's toilet, I found my second fairy tale nearly, if not quite, as popular as its predecessor.

"Oh, thank you, teacher; do, please, tell us another—just one, for the last;" and I was racking my brains to find a finale, when prudence suggested a glance at my watch. I found the time, for whose arrival I had so devoutly prayed, had come and gone: it was nearly six o'clock.

I told the disappointed children I must leave them, and was the less remorseful, inasmuch as I perceived signs of buns and milk, which I knew would be all powerful to console under the sudden termination of the story-telling.

As I walked home, many thoughts flitted through my mind, on the best and most attractive way of influencing the minds of children of this class. Most Sunday and national school-teachers do not give enough heed to the play and cultivation of fancy and imagination amongst the children of the poor. The children of the rich either read for themselves, or are read to, an unlimited number of tales, and even if they lacked these condiments of life, their everyday experience is not ordinarily destitute of "sweetness and light" of a kind. But what sweetness and light, what beauty and grace, ever enter into a poor child's life from one year's end to another? The streets, its nursery; the gutters, its playground; its infant library, if it have any at all, halfpenny sheets of ribald songs; its games, pitch-and-toss.

It is a marvel that fancy and imagination are not wholly crushed out of their minds, and that it is not so, proves how strongly Nature has implanted them. Should not the fact that we find them fresh and strong, in spite of adverse influences, lead us to consider how best we can follow her leadings and recognise her aims?

The Bible properly handled, should be as delightful to the child as a collection of fairy tales; and when it is not so, the fault is neither in the learner nor in the lesson taught, but in the teacher, who does not understand that a book so highly dramatic and so intensely pictorial should be taught in a dramatic and pictorial manner?

There is no reason why Samson should not be as interesting as "Jack the Giant Killer;" nor why

those children who could feel so strongly the pictured love of Beauty for her father, and the forgiveness accorded by Cinderella to her spiteful sisters, should be slow to recognise the same virtues shining forth in Jephtha's daughter, in Ruth, and in Joseph.

In treating of Bible teaching I am not speaking theoretically, for I have myself realised every word I write. Many years ago, I resolved my own children should grow up loving the Bible as I loved the "Arabian Nights," only with that added reverence which is rarely far to seek in a little child's heart. I never put the Scriptures into their hands as a lesson book, and, indeed, I never allowed them to attempt to read them for themselves till they were old enough to require no assistance, save of a critical sort. The result has been that when young no tale offered them so much attraction as one out of the Bible, and now they are grown up to manhood it is still to the Bible they resort, as to an inexhaustible supply of everything they need for the nourishment and delight of their minds and souls and spirits. I would, therefore, commend this little sketch of an afternoon spent with the fairies, to the attention of those who are concerned with the education of the poor, and who are yet uncertain as to the admission of the imaginative element into their teaching.

Fancy and imagination are God's good gifts to the little ones he so tenderly loves; but the best heavenly gifts may be abused, and fancy and imagination if unfed by true beauty, or unrestrained by culture, will in the one case pine and languish, in the other run into lawless riot and wild disorder.

Let us, then, place before them the feast for which their little souls are craving, else shall we be as those hard-hearted parents who, when their children asked bread of them, gave them a stone.

C. MILLER.

#### "THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

18. A king mentioned in the Old Testament and another in the New, who made the same offer.

19. How are the Israelites as the people of God, described in the New Testament, while journeying from Egypt to Canaan?

20. Adduce an instance in which a man was slain in a city of refuge.

21. David and Moses were at one time in a like bad case amongst their own people.

22. A king and a prophet both refer to the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt, in the very same terms.

23. The Jordan was miraculously crossed on three occasions. Give them.

24. What three kings are denounced in exactly the same words?

25. On three occasions in Scripture the phrase, "The windows of heaven," is used. Mention them.

26. Show from a passage in Genesis that the very words of Scripture are sometimes of importance.